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CLAIMS:-

1. A gaming machine including:
a base game of chance having random outcomes which include predetermined winning outcomes, said machine configured to pay winnings upon the occurrence of
5 any of the winning outcomes; wherein said machine is further configured to provide a feature game which can be triggered by a player at any time of their choosing.
2. A gaming machine including:
a base game of chance having random outcomes which include predetermined winning outcomes, such that the machine pays winnings upon the occurrence of any
10 of the winning outcomes; wherein said machine is further configured to provide a feature game which can be triggered by a player at any time of their choosing during a specified time period defining a window of opportunity.
3. A gaming machine according to claim 2 wherein said time period is triggered at random.
- 15 4. A gaming machine according to claim 2 wherein said time period is triggered by a predetermined winning combination occurring during the play of said base game.
5. A gaming machine according to any one of claims 2 to 4 wherein varying levels of said window of opportunity exist such that higher levels are perceived as returning increased winnings.
- 20 6. A gaming machine according to any one of claims 2 to 5 wherein feature qualifying attributes are accumulated during play of said base game.
7. A gaming machine according to claim 6 wherein accumulation of particular attributes will result in opening said window of opportunity such that a player may choose to trigger said feature game.
- 25 8. A gaming machine according to claim 6 or claim 7 wherein said attributes are accumulated at random.

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9. A gaming machine according to claim 6 or claim 7 wherein said attributes are accumulated in the event of said base game being played a predetermined number of times.
10. A gaming machine according to claim 6 or claim 7 wherein said attributes are accumulated during play of said base game on the occurrence of predetermined combinations.
11. A gaming machine according to any one of claims 7 to 10 wherein accumulated attributes that are used to trigger a feature game may be subsequently removed from a player's tally.
12. A gaming machine according to claim 11 wherein said accumulated attributes are removed at random.
13. A gaming machine according to claim 11 wherein said accumulated attributes are removed on the occurrence of a predetermined combination occurring during the play of said base game.
14. A gaming machine according to any one of claims 6 to 11 wherein said accumulated attributes are removed in the event of said base game being played a predetermined number of times since the previous feature game was played.
15. A gaming machine according to any one of claims 6 to 14 wherein the characteristics of said feature game are dependent on the accumulation of specific feature attributes.
16. A gaming machine according to claim 15 wherein accumulation of said attributes will result in a player receiving free games.
17. A gaming machine according to claim 15 wherein accumulation of said attributes will result in a player receiving win multipliers during free games.
18. A gaming machine according to claim 15 wherein accumulation of said attributes will result in a player receiving win multipliers for specific combinations including wins with substitutes symbols appearing.

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19. A gaming machine according to claim 15 wherein accumulation of said attributes will result in a player receiving bonus prizes.
20. A gaming machine according to claim 15 wherein accumulation of said attributes will result in a player receiving held reels.
- 5 21. A gaming machine according to claim 15 wherein accumulation of said attributes will result in a player receiving bonus reels.
22. A gaming machine according to claim 15 wherein accumulation of said attributes will result in a player receiving bonus scatter symbols.
23. A gaming machine according to claim 15 wherein accumulation of said
10 attributes will result in a player receiving bonus substitute symbols.
24. A gaming machine according to claim 15 wherein accumulation of said attributes will result in a player receiving bonus trigger combinations for further feature attributes.
25. A gaming machine including:
15 a base game of chance having random outcomes which include predetermined winning outcomes, such that the machine pays winnings upon the occurrence of any of the winning outcomes; wherein said machine is further configured to provide a jackpot feature game which can be triggered by a player upon the accumulation of a predetermined number of jackpot qualifying features.
- 20 26. A gaming machine according to any one of claims 25 wherein a player can accumulate said jackpot qualifying features during play of said base game.
27. A gaming machine according to claim 26 wherein said jackpot features are accumulated at random.
28. A gaming machine according to claim 26 wherein said jackpot features are
25 accumulated in the event of said base game being played a predetermined number of times.

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29. A gaming machine according to claim 26 wherein said jackpot features are accumulated during play of said base game on the occurrence of predetermined combinations.

30. A gaming machine according to any one of claims 25 to 29 wherein player
5 interaction is required to determine if a jackpot prize is won.

31. A gaming machine according to claim 30 wherein a jackpot screen will appear for facilitating said player interaction when a player triggers a jackpot feature game.

32. A gaming machine according to any one of claims 25 to 31 wherein said jackpot can be contributed from a stand-alone machine.

10 33. A gaming machine according to any one of claims 25 to 31 wherein said jackpot can be contributed from a number of machines networked together.

34. A gaming machine according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said base game is a spinning reel type using a simulation of five adjacent wheels to present an array of randomly selected symbols in five columns and three rows.

15 35. A method of operating a gaming machine, the method including the steps of: providing a base game of chance having random outcomes which include predetermined winning outcomes, paying winnings on the occurrence of any of the winning outcomes; and
providing a feature game which can be triggered by a player at any time of their
20 choosing.

36. A method of operating a gaming machine, the method including the steps of: providing a base game of chance having random outcomes which include predetermined winning outcomes, paying winnings on the occurrence of any of the winning outcomes; and
25 providing a feature game which can be triggered by a player at any time of their choosing during a specified time period defining a window of opportunity.

37. The method as claimed in claim 36 wherein said time period is triggered at random.

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38. The method as claimed in claim 36 wherein said time period is triggered by a predetermined winning combination occurring during the play of said base game.

39. The method as claimed in any one of claims 36 to 38 wherein varying levels of said window of opportunity exist such that higher levels are perceived as returning
5 increased winnings.

40. The method as claimed in any one of claims 36 to 39 wherein feature qualifying attributes are accumulated during play of said base game.

41. The method as claimed in claim 40 wherein accumulation of particular attributes will result in opening said window of opportunity such that a player may choose to
10 trigger said feature game.

42. The method as claimed in claim 40 or claim 41 wherein said attributes are accumulated at random.

43. The method as claimed in claim 40 or claim 41 wherein said attributes are accumulated in the event of said base game being played a predetermined number of
15 times.

44. The method as claimed in claim 40 or claim 41 wherein said attributes are accumulated during play of said base game on the occurrence of predetermined combinations.

45. The method as claimed in any one of claims 40 to 44 wherein accumulated
20 attributes that are used to trigger a feature game may be subsequently removed from a player's tally.

46. The method as claimed in claim 45 wherein said accumulated attributes are removed at random.

47. The method as claimed in claim 45 wherein said accumulated attributes are
25 removed on the occurrence of a predetermined combination occurring during the play of said base game.

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48. The method as claimed in any one of claims 40 to 45 wherein said accumulated attributes are removed in the event of said base game being played a predetermined number of times since the previous feature game was played.

49. The method as claimed in any one of claims 40 to 48 wherein the characteristics
5 of said feature game are dependent on the accumulation of specific feature attributes.

50. The method as claimed in claim 49 wherein accumulation of said attributes will result in a player receiving free games.

51. The method as claimed in claim 49 wherein accumulation of said attributes will result in a player receiving win multipliers during free games.

10 52. The method as claimed in claim 49 wherein accumulation of said attributes will result in a player receiving win multipliers for specific combinations including wins with substitutes symbols appearing.

53. The method as claimed in claim 49 wherein accumulation of said attributes will result in a player receiving bonus prizes.

15 54. The method as claimed in claim 49 wherein accumulation of said attributes will result in a player receiving held reels.

55. The method as claimed in claim 49 wherein accumulation of said attributes will result in a player receiving bonus reels.

56. The method as claimed in claim 49 wherein accumulation of said attributes will
20 result in a player receiving bonus scatter symbols.

57. The method as claimed in claim 49 wherein accumulation of said attributes will result in a player receiving bonus substitute symbols.

58. The method as claimed in claim 49 wherein accumulation of said attributes will result in a player receiving bonus trigger combinations for further feature attributes.

25 59. A method of operating a gaming machine, the method including the steps of:

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providing a base game of chance having random outcomes which include predetermined winning outcomes, paying winnings on the occurrence of any of the winning outcomes; and

5 providing a jackpot feature game which can be triggered by a player upon the accumulation of a predetermined number of jackpot qualifying features.

60. The method as claimed in claim 59 wherein a player can accumulate said jackpot qualifying features during play of said base game.

61. The method as claimed in claim 60 wherein said jackpot features are accumulated at random.

10 62. The method as claimed in claim 60 wherein said jackpot features are accumulated in the event of said base game being played a predetermined number of times.

63. The method as claimed in claim 60 wherein said jackpot features are accumulated during play of said base game on the occurrence of predetermined
15 combinations.

64. The method as claimed in any one of claims 59 to 63 wherein player interaction is required to determine if a jackpot prize is won.

65. The method as claimed in claim 64 wherein a secondary jackpot screen will appear for facilitating said player interaction when a player triggers a jackpot feature
20 game.

66. The method as claimed in any one of claims 59 to 65 wherein said jackpot can be contributed from a stand-alone machine.

67. The method as claimed in any one of claims 59 to 65 wherein said jackpot can be contributed from a number of machines networked together.

25 68. The method as claimed in any one of claims 35 to 67 wherein said base game is a spinning reel type using a simulation of five adjacent wheels to present an array of randomly selected symbols in five columns and three rows.